

among them some perfinned ones, and applied the fake overprint. The intention was not to fake perfins.

Sadly enough, I have now discovered that a forger of perfins has been operating in Poland recently. Maybe he still is. This is the story:

During the past three years, I have been buying worldwide perfins in bulk lots from a stamp collector in Poland. He has been paid in German DEM, and at prices of mutual satisfaction. A higher price for stamps of certain countries, such as Danzig, Finland, etc. was agreed upon.

In September of last year, I received a mixture lot of about 600 perfins. While sorting them I found two stamps of Finland with a perfin "T", an up to now unknown pattern. It was too good to be true. Furthermore, a stamp of Aden perfinned "HL". Yes Aden! A closer examination produced patterns not previously recorded from Danzig, Hong Kong, and Jamaica.

There was no question in my mind - many of the perfins were fakes. Now the detective work began.

I decided to wait a while before confronting my Polish supplier. Maybe there was more to come. Sure enough - it was. Characteristic of the fakes turned out to be as follows. The forger had used a single punch to produce the various patterns. It had been applied to the back side of the stamp (it is easy to tell under a magnifier), but with the letters in reverse. As most perfin collectors know, the perforating needles are very, very seldom arranged in such a manner. The forger has obviously used his duplicate stock of stamps. Most of these bear the Michel catalog number in pencil on the upper right hand corner of the back.

There was other evidence to show that the forger does not know much about perfins. His line of action was, at least to begin with, to trace a genuine perfin pattern on to the back of another stamp, using a red pencil, remnants of which can sometimes be seen. He then clamped a number of stamps of various denominations and most often with different cancellations. An impossibility, and unlikely even if derived from a POKO machine or equivalent.

At a later stage the forger got carried away and, as an addict of some kind, began to apply fake

A Polish Forger

Magnus Werner (#1308)

It is gratifying to know that perfin collectors have so far been spared the scourge of forgeries. Of course, there are a few well known examples, such as the faked Board of Trade "crown over B.I." of Great Britain, the forged "OFICIAL" stamps of Guatemala and the "E" of Bavaria. However, these are well documented and described. Occasionally "accidental" perfins turn up on stamps with forged overprints. Examples exist on the first issue of Sudan, overprinted stamps of Egypt, as well as the first issue of Danzig, overprints on German stamps. There may be others. In those cases the forgers probably acquired a quantity of cheap stamps,

perfin on common German stamps. He certainly would not harvest much profit from it, at about 5p apiece. Checking the lots I had received prior to September 1992, I found no fakes.

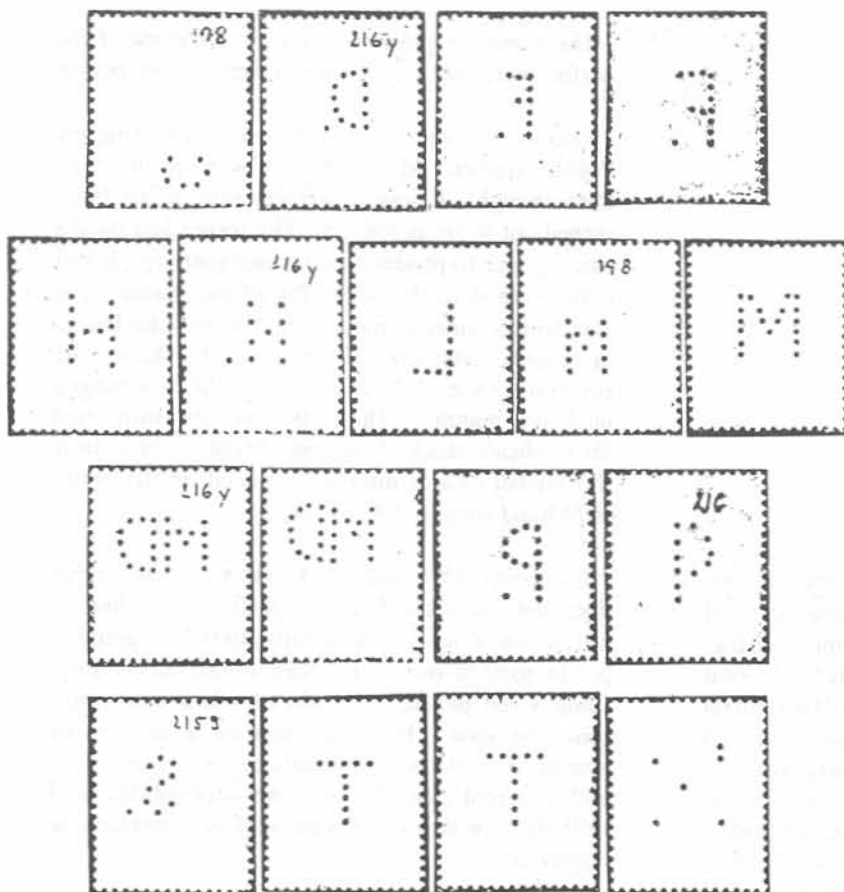
With enough evidence on hand, I eventually confronted my supplier in Bydgoszcz, Poland, who claimed to have been shocked by the disclosure and hastened to protest his innocence. He declared that he had bought these perfins from a collector/dealer in Gdansk. I returned some of the forgeries to him. He claims that he has reported the matter to the Polish Philatelic Society and forwarded the faked stamps. I am not sure of the outcome. My supplier has refused to tell me the name of the alleged forger. I can only hope that I was the only victim, and that no more fakes have been spread. He has been warned, I am told.

A total of 107 fakes were discovered, half of which on German stamps. I have made photostat copies of all and kept about 50% of them, some as reference and the rest to be turned over to the ARGE Lochungen in BDPH e.V., Germany.

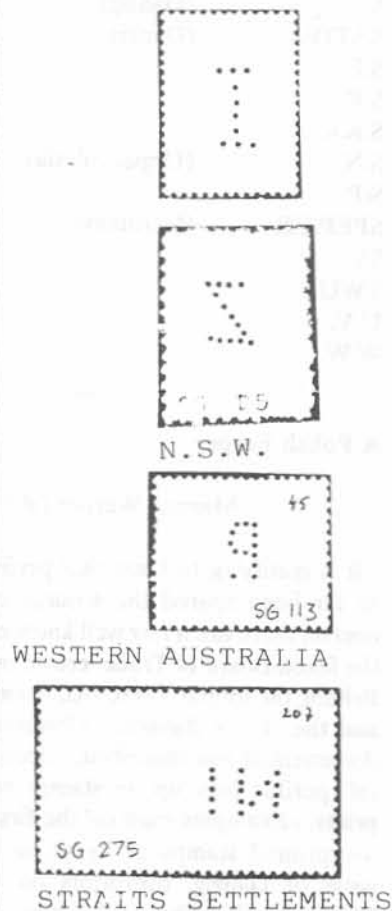
Attempts to follow up this matter has not been met with much success, owing in part to my non-existent knowledge of the Polish language.

Editor's note: Magnus Werner's original research article pointing out these dangerous forgeries appeared simultaneously in the German Club's *Rundbrief* and The Perfin Society's *Bulletin* (GB). A copy of the original manuscript and illustrations was forwarded to the *Bulletin* by Gerald E. Soutar (LM68).

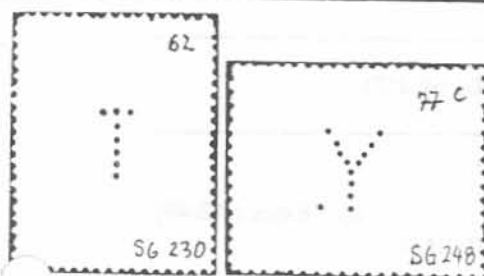
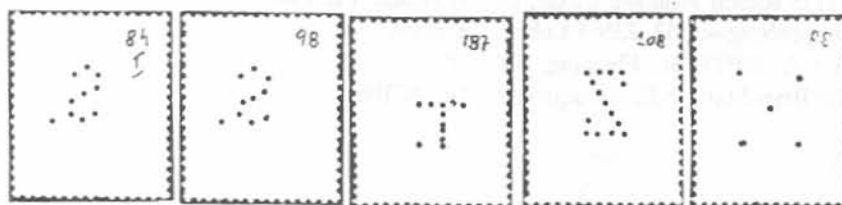
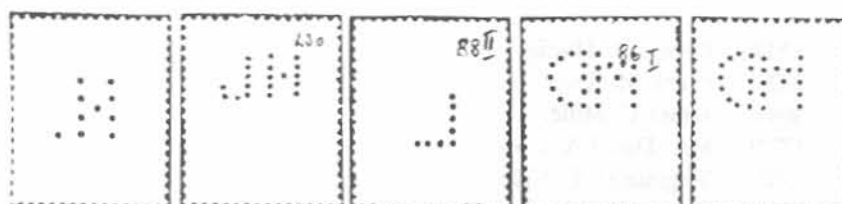
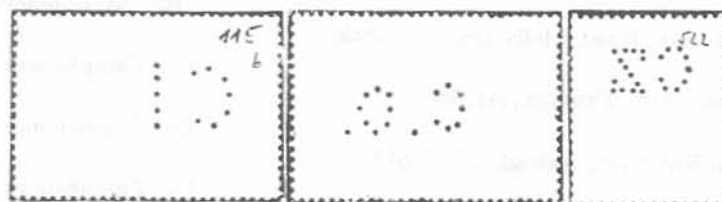
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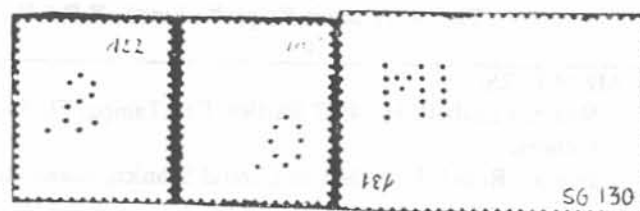
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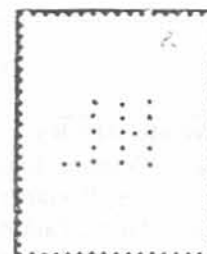
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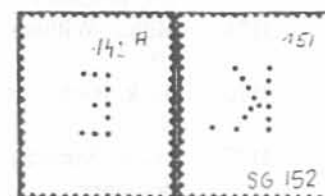
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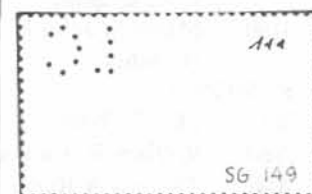
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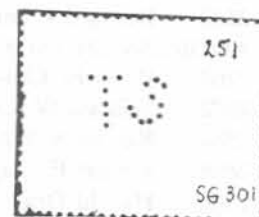
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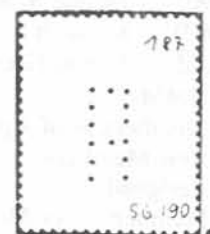
HONG KONG



BRITISH HONDURAS



MAURITIUS



ST. VINCENT